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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 002178

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SUBJECT: MBZ ON IRAQ, IRAN, PAKISTAN

REF: ABU DHABI 1008

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison.  
For reasons 1.4 (a), (b), and (d).

1. (U) Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, s weekly Sunday "VIP Majlis" provided an excellent opportunity for a visiting National Defense University delegation to observe first-hand the UAEG, s informal consultative process. MbZ, brothers MinState Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan and Interior Minister Sheikh Saif, and Labor Minister al Ka'abi were joined by several dozen prominent Abu Dhabi officials and businessmen for the weekly gathering at Bateen Palace.

NDU  
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2. (U) NDU President Lt. Gen. Dunn and National War College Deputy Commandant Ambassador Wahba briefed MbZ on several new NDU initiatives, including opportunities for UAE students in the Information Resources Management College program, which emphasizes threats, vulnerabilities, and risks in a net-centric environment. Ambassador Sison praised the UAE's selection of NDU candidates, noting that several were serving in key positions today: GHQ Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff MG Mohammed Hilal al-Kaabi, GHQ Director of General Procurement Obaid Al Ketbi, Deputy Commander UAE Air Force Brigadier Ali, and MbZ's aide Yousef al Otaiba had all benefited from NDU programs.

Iraq  
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3. (C) Ambassador Sison noted that day's visit to Iraq by Secretary Rice, highlighting the Secretary's encouragement

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for continued momentum in the political process and her meetings with PM al-Jaafari and KDP leader Barzani. MbZ voiced disdain for al-Jaafari, citing (again) his concerns over the Prime Minister's ties to Iran. These concerns were aimed at Jaafari's Dawaa Party colleagues, as well. While agreeing that it was important for Iraq's Sunni Arabs to be more involved in the political process and in drafting the constitution, MbZ complained that "there wasn't one worthwhile Sunni" on the scene. He criticized new Sunni Defense Minister Dulaimi as being "in it for himself." Nor did MbZ have anything good to say about former Iraqi Finance Minister Mahdi's nomination as one of two Vice Presidents, complaining that Mahdi "did not work for the people of Iraq." Nonetheless, MbZ said he agreed with the USG's efforts to encourage the various Iraqi factions to work together. The UAE would continue to help train Iraqi police forces at the UAE's police academy in Al Ain and provide reconstruction assistance. It was important for the region as a whole that the U.S. and its allies "got it right" in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, he underscored. (Note: MbZ aide Yousef al Otaiba had a few days earlier shared with Ambassador concerns passed by former PM Allawi that Dulaimi was "devious," "bad news," "very close" to Iranian intelligence, and had been introduced to the Iranians by Chalabi. Yousef had also noted the UAEG, s impression Mahdi had not always been a "team player" in the government of former PM Allawi. End note.)

Iran  
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4. (S) Turning to Iran, MbZ voiced certainty that the EU-3 efforts with Iran would break down and that Iran would resume its nuclear activities ) if it had not already done so. Repeating concerns first voiced to us in February (reftel), MbZ appeared convinced that it was only a matter of time before Israel or the U.S. would strike Iranian nuclear facility targets. U.S. installations in the Gulf could be targeted by Iran in the aftermath of such an action, he warned. MbZ agreed with the USG, s tough line with Tehran and the Europeans. A nuclear-armed Iran would destabilize the Gulf region and possibly allow terrorist access to WMD. MbZ asked Lt. Gen. Dunn whether it would be possible for anyone to "take out" all locations of concern in Iran via air power; Lt. Gen. Dunn voiced doubt that this would be possible given the dispersed locations. "Then it will take ground forces!" MbZ exclaimed. Ambassador noted that the UAE's Director of Military Intelligence, BG Essa al Mazrouei, would pay counterpart visits this week to CENTCOM, J-2, DIA, and CIA for discussions on Iran and Iraq-related matters.

MbZ said he looked forward to sharing "contingency planning" scenarios in future conversations.

Pakistan

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15. (C) Ambassador asked about MbZ's visit the week before to Lahore to meet with Pakistani President Musharraf. MbZ chuckled and asked why the USG "always" convinced the Pakistanis to delay news of the capture of senior Al Qaeda operatives such as Abu Faraj al Libbi. MbZ went on to congratulate Washington for its decision to allow U.S. firms to bid for contracts to provide F-16s and other defense technology to Pakistan. It was important to support Musharraf as he battled the terrorists, he emphasized. While the Indians had and would continue to balk at the decision, the region needed Musharraf to stay strong. There was no alternative leader in sight, MbZ opined. Besides, he continued, the F-16 decision would not tip the military balance between India and Pakistan. Even if it had, India's strength as a stable democracy would ensure that it would not ever be in as "risky" a situation as its neighbor. MbZ then slapped his knee and said "you, ll never guess what Musharraf asked me...he asked me whether the UAE had received approval for the Predator!" (Note: the USG's inability to meet the UAE's request for an armed Predator remains a sore point for MbZ, although he has not directly raised the issue with us for some time.)

Gyrocopter, GAWC

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16. (SBU) MbZ also referred to his interest in exploring selling the UAE's "gyrocopter" (a helicopter-supported UAV co-developed with Austrian company Schiebel) to the U.S. Air Force, an idea he first floated during Gen. Moseley's visit for the May 3 F-16 ceremony. MbZ noted that his aide would pass detailed gyrocopter specifications to the Embassy this week. (Note: We will be exploring this initiative with CENTAF and CENTCOM in relation to force protection aerial surveillance system needs at Al Dhafra airbase for the 380 th Air Expeditionary Wing. End note.)

17. (C) Lt. Gen. Dunn complimented MbZ on the Gulf Air Warfare Center (GAWC), which he and the NDU group had toured that morning. MbZ expressed satisfaction over the relationship between the UAE and U.S. Air Forces, but expressed disappointment that more GCC countries had not joined recent GAWC classes. Ambassador noted the recent robust participation by Saudi Arabia in the GAWC's fourth class, which had included six Saudi F-15s and two young pilots who were also members of the Saudi royal family. MbZ asked whether the two high-ranking Saudis had actually completed all requirements for graduation or had been "passed through." Ambassador confirmed that they had completed all course requirements. MbZ commented that "the real reason" the Saudis had turned out for the GAWC class had been "to see what the UAE was up to" with the F-16 Block 60 and other procurement successes. Although Egypt and Jordan wished to join in the next GAWC class, MbZ added, they also wanted the UAE Air Force to pay fuel costs. MbZ said he had asked both countries "to go talk to ADNOC," the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

France

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18. (U) MbZ noted that he would travel to Paris June 18-20 to meet with President Chirac, recalling that he had canceled his trip to France at the last minute in mid-January.

Camel Jockeys

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19. (SBU) On the margins of the MbZ conversation, Ambassador thanked Interior Minister Sheikh Saif for his assistance the week before in allowing G/TIP visitor Feleke Assefa access to camel jockey rehabilitation and social support centers. Ambassador noted that a Tier 3 ranking remained a possibility despite the UAEG's vigorous efforts since mid-March with UNICEF, IOM, and others. A trafficking in persons reassessment would take place in August, she noted, and it was important for the UAE to continue the good work it was doing in solving the problem. MbZ aide Yousef al Otaiba promised to forward a copy of the UAE-UNICEF TIP implementing agreement and budget. (Note: he has done so; we have forwarded the document electronically to G/TIP and NEA/ARPI. End note.)

Labor and the FTA

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10. (SBU) Labor Minister al Ka'abi noted he had received reports that the U.S. and UAE sides had moved closer on the text of the labor chapter of the FTA during the last day of negotiations. He reiterated the UAEG's concern that it

receive some recognition of its unique demographic situation,  
as only 15 percent of the population held Emirati  
citizenship.  
SISON